DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 382 802 CE 068 882

AUTHOR	Stecher, Brian M.; And Others
TITLE	Improving Performance Measures and Standards for Workforce Education.
INSTITUTION	National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Berkeley, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	May 95
CONTRACT	V051A30003-95A; V051A30004-95A
NOTE	65p.; For an earlier study, see ED 378 364.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Materials Distribution Service, Western Illinois University, 46 Horrabin Hall, Macomb, IL 61455 (order no. MDS-821: $3.50).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accountability; *Competency Based Education; Educational Planning; *Federal Legislation; Job Training; Performance Factors; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; *Program Improvement; Secondary Education; *Standards; Technical Assistance; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Carl D Perkins Voc and Appl Techn Educ Act 1990

ABSTRACT

This report extends the results of an earlier study on the use of performance measures and standards to suggest principles for designing outcome-based program improvement systems. It examines the implications of that research for enhancing accountability in future federal work force preparation legislation. It also illustrates specifically how the language of the Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (Perkins II) could be changed to carry out the recommendations of the earlier study. Four features are identified that were lacking in Perkins II but are important for an outcome-based system to promote effective program improvement: (1) coordinate separate components into a more integrated system for planning, implementing, monitoring, and improving vocational education and training; (2) increase the emphasis on the use of the system of performance measures and standards as a program improvement tool; (3) clarify the requirements for measures and standards and improve their technical quality; and (4) increase the amount of technical assistance provided by federal and state agencies to support change at the local and state levels. Specific examples are given of changes in the language of Perkins II to incorporate these principles. An appendix contains the complete text of the proposed revisions with detailed commentary comparing the new law to the old. (YLB)

ED 382 802

NCRVE

National Center for Research in Vocational Education

University of California, Berkeley

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS FOR WORKFORCE EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Supported by
the Office of Vocational and Adult Education,
U.S. Department of Education

CE 068 882

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This publication is available from the:

National Center for Research in Vocational Education
Materials Distribution Service
Western Illinois University
46 Horrabin Hall
Macomb, IL 61455

800-637-7652 (Toll Free)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS FOR WORKFORCE EDUCATION

Brian M. Stecher
Lawrence M. Hanser

RAND

Mikala L. Rahn
Karen Levesque
Steven G. Klein
David Emanual

MPR Associates

National Center for Research in Vocational Education
Graduate School of Education
University of California at Berkeley
2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 1250
Berkeley, CA 94704

Supported by
The Office of Vocational and Adult Education,
U.S. Department of Education

May, 1995

MDS-821

FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	National Center for Research in Vocational Education
Grant Number:	V051A30003-95A/V051A30004-95A
Act under which Funds Administered:	Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act P.L. 98-524
Source of Grant:	Office of Vocational and Adult Education U.S. Department of Education Washington, DC 20202
Grantee:	The Regents of the University of California c/o National Center for Research in Vocational Education 2150 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 1250 Berkeley, CA 94704
Director:	David Stern
Percent of Total Grant Financed by Federal Money:	100%
Dollar Amount of Federal Funds for Grant:	$6,000,000

Disclaimer:

This publication was prepared pursuant to a grant with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Grantees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view of opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy.

Discrimination:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Therefore, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education project, like every program or activity receiving financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education, must be operated in compliance with these laws.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research which informed this analysis could not have been conducted without the assistance of secondary and postsecondary vocational educators in seven states, who gave generously of their time and insights. Our colleagues E. Gareth Hoachlander and Bryan Hallmark also were important contributors to this study. Judy Wood assisted with text editing and document preparation.

PREFACE

This report extends the results of an earlier NCRVE study, *Improving Perkins II Performance Measures and Standards: Lessons Learned from Early Implementers in Four States*, published in 1994, on the use of performance measures and standards to suggest principles for designing outcome-based program improvement systems in light of current efforts to reform the U.S. workforce education system. At the time this project was undertaken, states were actively involved in implementing the Carl D. Perkins Applied Technology and Vocational Education Act of 1990 (Perkins II), and educators and policymakers were anticipating the reauthorization of the legislation in 1995. However, the policy environment has changed; other options such as consolidated block grants for education and training are receiving increasing attention. Although in its details the present document reflects an emphasis on Perkins II, in its general principles the report should be of interest to federal policymakers engaged in developing new education and training policy initiatives. A companion RAND Issue Paper, *Accountability and Workforce Training* (Stecher & Hanser, 1995), discusses the implications of this study and related research on accountability in a non-Perkins environment.

SUMMARY

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (Perkins II) has guided federal vocational education policy for the past five years. One of the most significant components of Perkins II was its emphasis on using systematic outcome data as a program monitoring and improvement tool. A recent NCRVE study of the effects of Perkins II, *Improving Perkins II Performance Measures and Standards: Lessons Learned from Early Implementers in Four States* (Stecher et al., 1994), found that the performance measures and standards provisions designed to promote program improvement were not achieving their full potential; it identified shortcomings and recommended actions that could be taken to improve the act.

This report examines the implications of that research for enhancing accountability in future federal workforce preparation legislation. It also illustrates specifically how the language of Perkins II could be changed to carry out the recommendations of the earlier study.

The following four features were identified as lacking in Perkins II but were found to be important for an outcome-based system to promote effective program improvement:

1. Coordinate separate components into a more integrated system for planning, implementing, monitoring, and improving vocational education and training.

2. Increase the emphasis on the use of the system of performance measures and standards as a program improvement tool.

3. Clarify the requirements for measures and standards and improve their technical quality.

4. Increase the amount of technical assistance provided by state and federal agencies to support change at the local and state levels.

Specific examples are given of changes in the language of Perkins II to incorporate these principles.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments i
Preface iii
Summary v
Introduction 1
- Background 2
- NCRVE Study of the Implementation and Impact of Measures and Standards 3
- Translating Results Into Legislation 6

Rationale for Legislative Changes 7
- Developing a Coordinated Program Improvement System 8
- Use of Information for Program Improvement 10
- Improved Measures and Standards 11
- Technical Assistance 13

Proposed 1995 Perkins Act Sections 14
References 25
Technical Appendix 27

INTRODUCTION

Current federal vocational education legislation expires in 1995, presenting the 104th Congress with an opportunity to reshape federal policy regarding secondary and postsecondary vocational education. At the time of this writing, it remains uncertain whether the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (Perkins II) will be reauthorized in its present form or whether federal vocational education initiatives will be "merged into a broader workforce-development bill" (Sommerfeld, 1994, p. 18). Given the growing emphasis on measurable outcomes and standards in government programs, requirements for a system of outcome measures and standards are likely to be included in new legislation, regardless of its format.

A recent study by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE), *Improving Perkins II Performance Measures and Standards: Lessons Learned from Early Implementers in Four States* (Stecher et al., 1994), suggests ways to enhance accountability in future federal vocational education legislation. This paper reviews the findings and recommendations of that study and illustrates how they could be translated into legislation. Specifically, we offer suggestions for more effective outcome-based program improvement and accountability procedures. The paper focuses only on those provisions that relate to evaluation and program improvement—often discussed under the heading "performance measures and standards." These suggestions are presented as revisions to the existing Perkins legislation, but they are equally relevant in the context of broader workforce development legislation. Therefore, the report should be of general interest to policymakers responsible for workforce training at the state and federal levels.

Examples of changes in language we suggest in this report are less relevant than the principles that guided them. Specifically, the results of the study suggest that any federal vocational education effort should incorporate the following:

- continued development of outcome-based program assessment tools
- greater coordination between vocational education and workforce development initiatives

- increased emphasis on the use of performance information for program improvement
- increased technical assistance to support these objectives

Furthermore, the language presented in this document may provide a useful starting point for other conceptualizations of the federal role in vocational education.

Background

Perkins II has guided federal vocational education policy for the past five years. It has been a remarkably influential piece of legislation, in part, because most states have opted to apply its provisions more broadly than required. Although the federal government supplies less than ten percent of the total resources devoted to secondary and postsecondary vocational education, most states have applied Perkins II requirements to locally and state-funded vocational education efforts as well as to those funded with federal resources.

One of the most significant changes embodied in Perkins II was an emphasis on using systematic outcome data as a monitoring and improvement tool for programs. Under Perkins II, states were required to develop statewide "systems of core standards and measures of performance" that would be used to determine the success of vocational programs and to serve as a basis for local program improvement. If necessary, these systems could also be used to justify state intervention. States were given considerable flexibility in developing their statewide systems; the law specified only two outcomes that were required to be measured. At a minimum, each state was required to collect measures of learning and competency gains in basic and more advanced academic skills, as well as at least one measure of occupational competency attainment, job or work skill attainment, or retention or student placement. Any additional measured outcomes were at the discretion of the Committees of Practitioners and state Departments of Education.

Those who endorsed this approach to program monitoring in vocational education hoped it would lead to better evaluation, richer communication, more focused program improvement at the local level, and wiser use of state technical assistance capabilities. It was hoped that states would implement efficient systems that provided local

administrators and instructors with meaningful performance data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their vocational programs and to design new strategies to improve the academic, technical, and labor-market outcomes of their students.

These hopes have not been fully realized, although states have made substantial strides in implementing performance measures and standards systems as envisioned in the federal legislation. However, there remains considerable room for improvement. The following summarizes the results of a recent NCRVE study on the implementation and impact of the Perkins II measures and standards. These findings form the basis for suggested changes in the legislation, which are elaborated in the section entitled "Rationale for Legislative Changes."

NCRVE Study of the Implementation and Impact of Measures and Standards

In the spring of 1993, NCRVE initiated a two-year study of the effects of Perkins II performance measures and standards for vocational education. At the time of the study, states had three years to implement these provisions. The study examined seven states' progress in implementing statewide systems of performance measures and standards, the effects of these systems on local vocational programs and state agencies, and the factors that influenced local and state actions.[1]

Four states which were "early adopters" of measures and standards were initially selected for study. In each state, we interviewed staff in the state agency (or agencies) that administered secondary and postsecondary vocational education, and administrators and instructors in both a secondary and a postsecondary vocational institution in two geographically separated regions. Respondents were asked about a number of related themes, including the implementation of performance measures and standards, their integration with other educational reform efforts, and the impact of measures and standards on their vocational programs. Repeat visits to each vocational institution were conducted the following year. In the second year, three additional states were added to the sample to provide greater contrast in terms of implementation and to broaden our exposure.

[1] No formal attempt was made to determine whether states were in compliance with Perkins II or to judge the quality of the measures and standards states had chosen to implement.

Results

This section summarizes the findings of the NCRVE study (Stecher et al., 1994). Substantial progress had been made in implementing measures and standards in the states that were visited, although much work remains to be done to make the systems function as envisioned in the law. At the time of our visits, little attention had been paid to building local- or state-level capacity for translating the measures and standards data into actions for local program improvement. These "leading edge" states were still largely engaged in developing and implementing their systems.

Furthermore, large variation was found in the states' approaches to the development and implementation of measures and standards. This variation was evident in almost every aspect of program implementation, including how the process was managed, who participated, and the level of resources devoted to it. These differences appeared to be jointly a function of the states' individuality and the flexibility inherent in Perkins II.

We identified several factors that affected implementation and contributed to the variation in state responses to performance measures and standards.[2] Some of these explanatory factors were elements of the local and state context, and are less responsive to federal policy intervention. Other factors are within the sphere of federal policy influence.

The level of flexibility afforded states was the first of five factors that could clearly be affected by federal actions. On the positive side, flexibility permitted states to create systems that were responsive to local conditions. On the negative side, the latitude afforded states increased the influence of state context, which heightened differences between states, and, in some cases, lengthened the implementation process.

The second explanatory factor was the separate and uncoordinated nature of the elements of Perkins II. The Perkins II priorities—measures and standards, integration, Tech Prep, and service to special populations—were not seen as a coordinated system at either the local or state levels. Similarly, performance measures and standards were not being used comprehensively to evaluate the other Perkins initiatives.

[2] See Stecher et al. (1994) for a complete description of the findings.

Third, there were neither models nor incentives for ensuring that performance measures and standards were used to improve programs. Perkins II contained an explicit framework for structuring systems, and a federal agency checked for compliance at the adoption stage. However, the law and regulations did little to emphasize information use.[3]

The fourth factor concerned resources and expertise at the state level. Perkins II created new responsibilities for state staff, but reduced the set-aside for state administration and provided little technical assistance. This presented a dilemma for states that lacked either the expertise or the resources to address these new demands.

Finally, the law mandated measurement of learning outcomes, even though there were few valid tests available for this purpose. The scarcity of appropriate tools for measuring selected learning outcomes led states to adopt alternatives that were less than optimal. States are still struggling with how to measure important student outcomes such as academic skill gains at the postsecondary level.

Recommendations

The study recommended several actions federal policymakers could take to enhance the future success of performance measures and standards in vocational education and to promote the program improvement goals of Perkins II.

- **Clarify the Interrelationships and Coordination Among Federal Mandates.** Policymakers should clarify the relationships among systems of measures and standards, the integration of vocational and academic education, Tech Prep programs, and service to special populations, as well as offer additional guidance about coordinating states' efforts in these areas. For example, performance measures and standards are clearly relevant to evaluating and improving School-to-Work transition programs, and the links between these activities should be stressed in any future omnibus workforce legislation.

[3] Some state vocational educators told us that Perkins II could be improved by adding "real" incentives and sanctions, that is, by tying funding to program performance. For example, they said that "joint planning" is not an adequate penalty for continued failure to make substantial progress toward meeting standards. Termination of funding might be more appropriate. This issue created controversy at the time the law was written, and it continues to generate debate today. This study did not provide adequate evidence to support or reject such a recommendation.

- **Create Models for Outcome-Based Program Improvement.**
  At present, most state action is still driven by the mandate to develop the structure of measures and standards. Little has been done to use that structure to make programs better. Local and state agencies need assistance in translating outcome deficiencies into action plans.

- **Provide Focused Technical Assistance for Choices and Resources.**
  The "flexible mandates" of Perkins II place greater demands on state agencies while restricting the use of funds for state-level services. Federal actions that help states respond to their choices and make better use of resources might significantly improve Perkins II implementation. States need resources and expertise to operate a reformed vocational education or workforce preparation system, and the law should promote both.

- **Address Common Measurement Problems.**
  The technology to measure learning and occupational performance gains in reliable, valid, and efficient ways is not widely available. Most states are not equipped with either the resources or expertise to fill this gap. The federal government needs to assume leadership in addressing these problems, since they are best solved nationally and are largely the result of federal legislation provisions.

Translating Results Into Legislation

Incorporating these changes into the federal vocational education or workforce preparation legislation will increase the efficacy of statewide systems of measures and standards. While the results of this study do not speak to all aspects of the legislation, they do suggest to us specific changes in the measures and standards provisions. The section in this document entitled "Rationale for Legislative Changes" presents our rationale for translating the findings of the study into changes in legislation. It elaborates on four main themes drawn from the results, and presents specific recommendations for revising the law. The next section, "Proposed 1995 Perkins Act Sections," contains a marked-up version of Perkins II showing where the changes might be made in the event of reauthorization. The paper concludes with a Technical Appendix that contrasts the new and old language along with a commentary on proposed changes.

We remind the reader that we have not attempted to rewrite the whole act or to draft omnibus legislation. We aim only to demonstrate how results of our research have practical value in informing future legislation. Many of our suggested revisions to Perkins II could as easily be imbedded in a consolidated workforce preparation bill.

RATIONALE FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The changes we propose flow directly from the research findings summarized in the previous section. In the case of performance measures and standards, the links between federal legislation and state actions are relatively clear and direct, and it is possible to trace implementation effects back to legislative causes. This linkage facilitates the task of revising the law to promote desired outcomes. We believe that the intent of the federal legislation was to promote effective program improvement, and that this can best be accomplished by including four major changes in future legislation:

1. Coordinate separate components into a more integrated system for planning, implementing, monitoring, and improving vocational education and training.

2. Increase the emphasis on the use of the system of performance measures and standards as a program improvement tool.

3. Clarify and improve language describing the required measures and standards themselves.

4. Increase the amount of technical assistance provided by state and federal agencies to support change at the local and state levels.

To illustrate how these changes could be imbedded in federal legislation, we revised selected portions of Sections 115, 116, and 117 of Perkins II—the legislation describing performance measures and standards and the requirements for local and state assessment and evaluation. The proposed revisions have been italicized. Data limitations prevented us from undertaking a complete redrafting of the law. We have, therefore, limited our efforts to only those sections where our earlier findings justify legislative reworking. *Readers should not assume that we endorse all the non-italicized sections of*

the act; in most cases, these components are left unchanged because they were not informed by our research.

The rest of this section describes in narrative format the major changes we recommend. This approach communicates better the goals we were trying to achieve and the broad changes we made to achieve them. The complete text of the proposed revisions, with detailed commentary comparing the new law to the old, is contained in the Technical Appendix.

Developing a Coordinated Program Improvement System

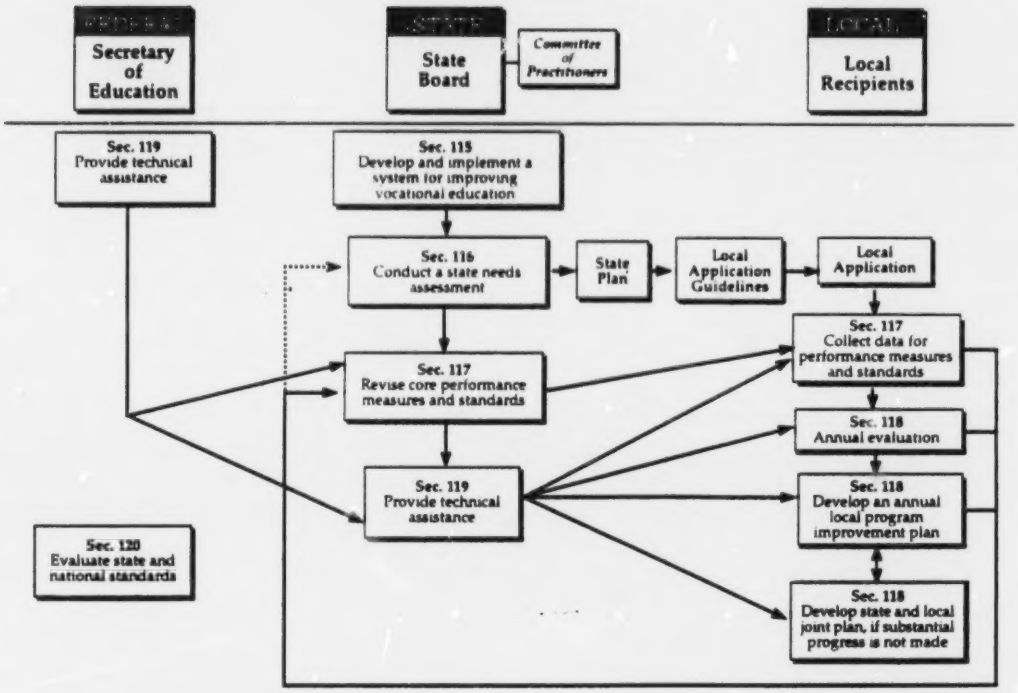
Our revisions attempt to coordinate the separate elements found in Perkins II into a more integrated system for planning, implementation, monitoring, and improving vocational programs. The logical model underlying this system is illustrated in Figure 1. Revised language clarifies the interrelationships between the elements of Perkins II, including state needs assessments, measures and standards, annual local evaluations, and program improvement plans. Our revisions also promote greater coordination of measures and standards with other federal workforce and education initiatives in the following ways:

- Performance measures and standards are conceptualized as one part of a larger, interconnected system for improving vocational education at the local and state levels. The system includes many components, all of which interact and inform one another. For example, the state needs assessment drives the system of measures and standards and the local application process. These, in turn, inform the annual local evaluation, which leads to program improvement planning, to periodic review of the system of measures and standards, and ultimately back to the state needs assessment. In this way the information comes full circle and helps to promote improvement of the whole system.

- To make performance measures and standards a more comprehensive program improvement tool, they are applied to all major Perkins instructional initiatives (including programs funded under Title III such as Tech Prep and consumer and home economics), not just to programs receiving funds under Title II.

- The Committee of Practitioners is required to review and revise the measures and standards annually, creating a self-improving system that is more responsive to changes in other vocational education policies.

Figure 1
Proposed Legislative Relationships


Secretary of Education
State Board
Committee of Practitioners
Local Recipients
Sec. 119 Provide technical assistance
Sec. 115 Develop and implement a system for improving vocational education
Sec. 116 Conduct a state needs assessment
State Plan
Local Application Guidelines
Local Application
Sec. 117 Collect data for performance measures and standards
Sec. 117 Revise core performance measures and standards
Sec. 118 Annual evaluation
Sec. 119 Provide technical assistance
Sec. 118 Develop an annual local program improvement plan
Sec. 120 Evaluate state and national standards
Sec. 118 Develop state and local joint plan, if substantial progress is not made

In our research, we recognized the clear need for coordination among federal workforce preparation programs. As a result, our suggested revisions in this area are particularly relevant in the context of a consolidated bill. Coordination among federal workforce education programs is promoted in the following ways:

- The State Board and the Committee of Practitioners are directed to consider all federal training and workforce preparation efforts when developing measures and standards and the program improvement system. Representatives of the agencies

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

responsible for administering related programs must be consulted in the appointment of the Committee of Practitioners.

- The State Board is directed to provide the Committee of Practitioners with information about other state assessment efforts that might be relevant to a comprehensive program improvement system.

- The federal government is directed to provide technical assistance to help states coordinate measures and standards with other federal initiatives.

Use of Information for Program Improvement

Our proposed changes represent a significant change in focus away from the initial development of the systems of measures and standards called for in Perkins II toward the use of these systems for future program improvement. Our research revealed that while states had made significant progress in developing their systems of measures and standards, for the most part they had not yet tackled the next step of using their systems for program improvement. Without explicit provisions for the use of performance measures and standards, the data they generate may languish in government files instead of being used to improve programs. Although the theme of measures and standards as the basis for a system of program improvement runs throughout our proposed revisions, it is most evident in Section 118, which sets specific requirements for program evaluation and improvement.

Increased relevance and usefulness of the annual evaluations for program improvement is promoted in the following ways:

- The requirement for program evaluation is explicitly written to include all the relevant component programs of Perkins (e.g., Title III programs such as Tech Prep), not just those efforts funded under Title II. This change ensures that information about which components of Perkins are or are not working is available to assist in program improvement planning.

- Teachers and parents are explicitly included in the evaluation process because they are important stakeholders and can contribute to the improvement of programs.

- The performance of special populations enrolled in vocational programs is to be specifically compared to the performance of other vocational students to ensure that staff monitor the access and success of students from special populations in each program area.

Additionally, program improvement activities are promoted in the following ways:

- The outcome of the annual evaluation is tied explicitly to a plan of program improvement emphasizing a link that is not sufficiently clear in current legislation.
- To promote program improvement as a continuing and ongoing process, a requirement has been added for all recipients to develop a local improvement plan, regardless of whether standards have been met.
- A requirement that the local improvement plan include a summary of the results of the local annual evaluation strengthens and emphasizes the link between these activities.
- A requirement that those local recipients who fail to meet their standards describe "specific strategies for making substantial progress" encourages follow-through from evaluation to program improvement.

Improved Measures and Standards

Measures and standards are the cornerstone of the Perkins program improvement system. Our revisions attempt to improve measures and standards in two ways: (1) by clarifying the requirements for such systems and (2) by improving the technical quality of the components. Clarification is achieved by adding definitions, reformulating descriptions, and reorganizing state options to reveal more of the existing similarities. Technical quality is enhanced by requiring that states pay more attention to questions of reliability, validity, and lack of bias, and by requiring that the federal government contribute to the solution of common measurement problems.

Clarification of systems of measures and standards is achieved in the following ways:

- Our revisions provide definitions for key terms that should be common throughout the country, including outcome, measure, standard, program, and special populations. Because of differing local contexts, we feel the definition of "substantial progress" ought to be a state prerogative, so the regulations require states to define this term in a measurable and consistent manner.

- The requirements for measures and standards are reformulated and reorganized to make them more logical and consistent. State systems must contain at least five measures (most already contain more than this), one each from the following categories: learning gains, work-related skills, retention or completion, placement, and access/equity. This ensures that programs are evaluated based upon a complete and balanced picture of their desired effects.

Technical quality is promoted in the following ways:

- States are required to revise measures and standards regularly, based on an examination of technical quality and usefulness. This ensures that important policy decisions are based on sound information.

- The federal government is required to contribute to the solution of common measurement problems such as evaluating the reliability, validity, and lack of bias in measures; measuring academic gains at the postsecondary level; and setting valid performance standards. These common problems, which were created by the legislation, are shared by all states and are most efficiently addressed nationally.

- To focus attention on the goal of program improvement and the difficult problems of measures and standards, the Secretary is required to report to Congress on the status of each state's system for improving vocational education and on the technical quality of the measures and standards that are adopted.

Technical Assistance

Several activities required under Perkins II were beyond the capacity of the local and state recipients to accomplish on their own. As a result, we have included a new Section 119, titled "Technical Assistance," that specifies actions the state and federal governments will take to assist recipients in carrying out their responsibilities for program improvement under reauthorized or consolidated legislation. We propose fundamentally different roles for the state and federal governments in the provision of technical assistance. Our distinction is based on those problems that we perceive as best solved nationally versus those that are primarily local and state in nature. The technical assistance role we propose for the federal government includes the following:

- Assistance to help states address measurement-related issues, including establishing the technical quality of measures (i.e., reliability, validity, and lack of bias). This category also includes assistance in developing acceptable assessment tools.

- Assistance with identifying, developing, and implementing program improvement strategies on a national level, in particular, helping to disseminate more broadly program improvement models and other lessons learned in individual states.

- Assistance with coordinating the measures and standards requirements with other evolving and emerging workforce enhancement initiatives, including industry skill standards and School-to-Work performance standards. It is our belief that coordination will increase the effectiveness of these efforts.

The states have the essential role of assisting local recipients in evaluating and improving their programs. This role includes the following responsibilities:

- Assistance in evaluating the effectiveness of programs based on performance measures and standards.

- Assistance in identifying and adopting appropriate strategies for improving performance.

- Training local administrators and instructors in using performance data to improve vocational programs and courses.

- Dissemination to local recipients of examples of effective performance data use to improve vocational courses and programs.

PROPOSED 1995 PERKINS ACT SECTIONS

This section illustrates how the recommendations above could be translated into specific legislation. We present the reforms in the context of Perkins II because that was the relevant federal law at the time of this study. Similar wording would be appropriate for achieving similar goals in the context of a consolidated approach to workforce training. The changes are highlighted in italics in the following text. We did not attempt to rewrite the entire act, just to revise those sections that relate to program improvement and accountability.

SEC. 115. IMPROVING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY*—Each State Board receiving funds under this Act shall develop and implement a system for improving vocational education at the State and local level that includes:*

(1) reappointing a State Committee of Practitioners (Section 115);

(2) conducting a State needs assessment in the first year under reauthorization and every two years thereafter (Section 116);

(3) implementing a set of core performance measures and standards (Section 117);

(4) conducting annual evaluations of program effectiveness (Section 118); and

(5) providing technical assistance to local recipients on using performance data to improve vocational courses and programs (Section 119).

This system shall build on the system initiated under the 1990 Perkins Act, and apply to all programs (as defined in Subsection (c)) receiving funds under Title II, and as appropriate, to programs funded under Title III of this Act.

(b) REQUIREMENT—Each State Board, before the expiration of the 30-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of the *1995 Perkins Act, shall reappoint* a State Committee of Practitioners (referred to as the "Committee") *to develop the*

elements of a program improvement system contained under the above general authority. Committee members will be appointed in consultation with local school officials representing eligible recipients, and representatives of organized labor, business, superintendents, community-based organizations, private industry councils established under Section 102(a) of the Job Training Partnership Act, State councils, parents, special populations, correctional institutions, the administrator appointed under Section 111(b)(1), the State administrator of programs assisted under Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act, the State administrator of programs assisted under Chapter 1 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the State administrator of programs for students of limited English proficiency, and guidance counselors, *and additionally—the State administrator of programs developed under Title II, Subtitle A of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, and the State administrator of programs assisted under Title III of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.*

(c) ***DEFINITIONS****—The State Board shall adopt the following definitions in its State plan:*

(1) Outcome—a measurable characteristic of student or program performance;

(2) Measure—a method for quantifying performance in an outcome area;

(3) Standard—the desired level of attainment on a measure, or the rate of progress on a measure;

(4) Program—a sequence of courses or instruction in a sequence or aggregation of occupational competencies that includes occupationally specific skills, general employability skills, work attitudes, applied academic learning, higher-order reasoning, and problem-solving skills;

(5) Special populations—includes individuals with disabilities, educationally and economically disadvantaged individuals (including foster children), individuals of limited English proficiency, individuals in programs nontraditional for their sex, and individuals in correctional institutions.

The State Board shall also define the term "substantial progress" in its State plan so that the term is measurable and applies consistently to all recipients of Perkins funds in the state.

SEC. 116. STATE *NEEDS* ASSESSMENT

(a) **IN GENERAL**—Each State Board receiving assistance under this Act shall conduct an assessment using measurable objective criteria developed by the State Board to assess program quality. Such criteria shall be developed in consultation with representatives of the *Committee* described in Section 115(*b*) and shall use information gathered by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and, *as* appropriate, other information. Each State Board shall widely disseminate such criteria. State Boards shall develop such criteria no later than the beginning of the *1996–1997* school year. Such criteria shall include—

(1) Information on outcomes—

(A) student gains in and/or attainment of academic, occupational, and/or generic work skills;

(B) student retention in and/or completion of secondary or postsecondary education and/or vocational programs;

(C) student placement into additional training or education, military service, and employment;

(D) other outcome areas identified by the State under Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act;

(2) Information on instructional practices and experiences—

(A) integration of academic and vocational education;

(B) the ability of the eligible recipients to meet the needs of special populations with respect to vocational education, *including providing incentives for participation, retention, and completion;*

(C) assessing the quality of vocational education programs in schools with high concentrations of poor *or* low-achieving students;

(D) enrollment, retention, and completion rates of students in vocational programs nontraditional for their sex;

(E) sequential courses of study leading to both academic and occupational competencies;

(F) linkages between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions;

(G) instruction and experience, to the extent practicable, in all aspects of the industry the students are preparing to enter;

(H) the relevance of programs to the workplace and to the occupations for which students are to be trained, and the extent to which such

programs reflect a realistic assessment of current and future labor market needs, including needs in areas of emerging technologies;

(I) the ability of the vocational curriculum, equipment, and instructional materials to meet the demands of the workplace;

(J) basic and higher order current and future workplace competencies that will reflect the hiring needs of employers;

(K) other factors considered appropriate by the State Board; and

(3) Procedures for using existing resources and methods developed in other programs receiving Federal assistance.

(b) **DEADLINE FOR ASSESSMENT**—Each State Board shall complete the assessment required by Subsection (a) before the expiration of the 6-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of the *1995 Perkins Act, and every two years thereafter.*

SEC. 117. STATE AND LOCAL MEASURES AND STANDARDS

(a) **GENERAL AUTHORITY**—Each State Board receiving funds under this Act shall *revise and implement a set of core standards and measures of performance* for secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs. *To advise the State Board, the Committee shall—*

(1) evaluate the reliability, validity, and lack of bias of the measures and standards developed under Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act;

(2) assess the extent to which data generated under Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act were used effectively by recipients to improve programs and identify barriers to effective use;

(3) recommend revisions to existing measures and standards; and

(4) develop new measures and standards as required under Subsection (b).

Revisions to the core measures and standards will be recommended by the Committee and approved by each State Board no later than one year after the enactment of the 1995 Perkins Act. This core shall apply to all programs (as defined in Section 115(c)(4)) receiving funds under Title II of this Act. Additionally, the State Board may require that the core apply to any programs funded under Title III such as consumer and homemaking education and tech-prep. Eligible recipients may make local modifications to such *core* based on economic, geographic, or demographic factors, or the characteristics of the

population to be served. Such modifications shall conform to the assessment criteria contained in the State plan. *The State Board shall convene the Committee on a regular basis to review, comment on, and propose revisions to the State's core standards and measures of performance for vocational programs.*

(b) **REQUIREMENTS**—Each system developed under Subsection (a) shall include *at least five measures and standards—*

(1) a measure of student learning gains in the achievement of academic skills;

(2) 1 or more *of the following measures of work-related skills—*

(A) occupational competency attainment in the industry a student is preparing to enter;

(B) attainment of work readiness or generic work skills;

(C) attainment of understanding of all aspects of the industry a student is preparing to enter;

(3) 1 or both of the following measures of retention or completion—

(A) retention in or completion of secondary or postsecondary education;

(B) retention in or completion of secondary or postsecondary occupational programs or other programs funded under Title III, as appropriate;

(4) a measure of placement into additional training or education (including placement into the postsecondary component of tech-prep or other School-to-Work transition program), military service, or employment; and

(5) a measure of access and equity such as rates of enrollment in, retention in, and/or completion of occupational or other programs for special populations in comparison to non-special populations, including male and female students in programs nontraditional for their sex.

(c) **CONSISTENCY *AND COORDINATION* WITH OTHER PROGRAMS**—In developing the standards and measures included in a system developed under Subsection (a), the State Board shall—

(1) consider standards and measures developed under job opportunities and basic skills training programs established and operated under a plan approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services that meets the requirements of Section 402(a)(19) of the Social Security Act;

(2) consider standards prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under Section 106 of the Job Training Partnership Act;

(3) coordinate with State efforts to implement performance measures developed under Title IV, Section 402 of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act;

(4) build on the content and student performance standards and related assessments developed under Title II, Part B of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in assessing student learning gains in the achievement of academic skills at the secondary level; and

(5) build on the industry skill standards and related assessments and certifications developed under Title V of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (the National Skill Standards Act) in assessing student attainment of occupational competencies at the secondary level, and at the postsecondary level as appropriate.

(d) INFORMATION PROVIDED BY STATE BOARD—

(1) The Committee shall make recommendations to the State Board with respect to modifying standards and measures to be used under this section, based on the information provided under paragraph (2) *and on the state needs assessment described under Section 118.*

(2) In order to improve the system of measures and standards as directed under Subsection (a), the State Board shall provide to the Committee information concerning differing types of standards and measures, including—

(A) the advantages and disadvantages of each type of standard or measure;

(B) instances in which such standards and measures have been effective;

(C) instances in which such standards and measures have not been effective;

(D) information about standards, measures, and assessment instruments already in use statewide that may be incorporated into the core set of performance measures and standards; and

(E) information provided through federal technical assistance as described under Section 119, as appropriate.

(3) In the event that the State Board does not accept the Committee's recommendations made as required by paragraph (1), the State Board shall set forth in the State plan its reasons for not accepting such recommendations.

(e) ***SUBMISSIONS****—Each State Board will submit to the Department of Education as part of its State plan: (1) the measures and standards to be used, and (2) an implementation plan including plans for providing technical assistance to local recipients of Perkins funds, as required under Section 119.*

SEC. 118. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

(a) ANNUAL EVALUATION—Each recipient of financial assistance under Part C of Title II shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of the *programs* conducted with assistance under this Act, *including programs funded under Title III as determined by the State Board in Section 117(a). This evaluation shall be accomplished in consultation with teachers, parents, representatives of individuals who are members of special populations, and industry representatives.* As part of such evaluation, each such recipient shall—

(1) evaluate the effectiveness of programs with respect to performance on each measure and standard developed under Section 117;

(2) evaluate the performance of special populations in comparison to non-special populations on each such measure and standard;

(3) evaluate the contribution of the instructional practices and experiences identified under Section 116(a)(2) to performance on the measures and standards;

(4) evaluate the contribution of any projects, services, and activities conducted with assistance under this Act to performance on the measures and standards; and

(5) identify and adopt strategies to improve performance on the measures and standards.

(b) LOCAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN—Beginning not less than 1 year after the implementation of the provisions of Section *117, all recipients of funds under Part C of Title II will develop a local program improvement plan that summarizes the self-evaluation conducted under Subsection (a). A recipient that*

does not meet the standards under Section 117 must describe in its local program improvement plan specific strategies for making substantial progress (as defined by the State Board under Section 115(c)) toward those standards in the coming year. Such local program improvement plans shall be updated annually.

(c) **STATE AND LOCAL JOINT PLAN**—If, 1 year *after* implementation of the plan described in Subsection (b), *and each year thereafter, substantial* progress in meeting the standards and measures developed *under Section 117* has not been made, the State shall work jointly with the recipient, and teachers, parents, and students concerned, to develop a plan for program improvement. Each such plan shall contain—

(1) a description of the technical assistance and program activities the State will provide to enhance the performance of the recipient;

(2) a reasonable timetable to improve *recipient* performance under the plan;

(3) a description of vocational education strategies *the recipient will adopt to improve performance on the measures;* and

(4) if necessary, a description of strategies *the recipient will adopt* to improve supplementary services provided to individuals who are members of special populations.

(d) **FURTHER ACTION**—The State shall, in conjunction with the eligible recipient, annually review and revise the joint plan developed under Subsection (c) in order to improve *program* performance and will continue to do so each consecutive year until the recipient sustains, for more than 1 year, *substantial progress toward or meets the standards developed under Section 117.*

SECTION 119. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(a) **FEDERAL ASSISTANCE**—The Secretary shall provide technical assistance to the States, *directly or by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, with respect to the development and implementation of systems under Section 115 and subsequent sections, including assistance on—*

(1) setting performance standards;

(2) evaluating the reliability, validity, and lack of bias of measures and standards;

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(3) selecting and developing appropriate assessment tools, including methods for assessing academic gains at the postsecondary level;

(4) coordinating Perkins measures and standards with other evolving and emerging federal initiatives such as National Industry Skill Standards and School-to-Work performance measures;

(5) collecting and disseminating information on models for using performance data for program improvement, particularly at the local level; and

(6) planning for and providing technical assistance to local recipients.

In providing such assistance, the Secretary shall utilize existing resources in other Federal agencies.

(b) STATE ASSISTANCE—Each State Board shall provide technical assistance, directly or by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, to local recipients with respect to the implementation of Sections 117 and 118, including—

(1) assistance on evaluating the effectiveness of programs based on the performance measures and standards developed under Section 117;

(2) assistance on identifying and adopting appropriate strategies for improving performance on such measures and standards;

(3) training local administrators and instructors in the use of performance data to improve vocational courses and programs based on the assessment conducted under Section 117(a); and

(4) disseminating to local recipients examples of the effective use of performance data to improve vocational courses and programs.

Section 102 allocates an annual amount for the technical assistance activities identified under this subsection from the allotment made to each State from funds appropriated under Section 3(a).

SEC. 120. *EVALUATING STATE AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS*

(a) REPORT—The Secretary shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the Congress not later than the expiration of the 4-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of *1995*. Such report shall include—

(1) a detailed description of the status of each State's system *for improving vocational education at the State and local level developed as required by Section 115 and subsequent sections;*

(2) an assessment of the *reliability, validity, and lack of bias of the measures and standards adopted under Section 117; and*

(3) an assessment of the degree to which the use of these systems have led to program improvement at the State and local levels.

REFERENCES

Sommerfeld, M. (1994, December 7). Voc.-Ed. law expected to get close scrutiny. *Education Week*, pp. 18, 21.

Stecher, B. M., & Hanser, L. M. (1995, May). *Accountability and Workforce Training* (IP-150). Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Stecher, B. M., Rahn, M. L., Hanser, L. M., Levesque, K., Hoachlander, E. G., Emanuel, D., Hallmark, B., & Klein, S. G. (1994). *Improving Perkins II performance measures and standards: Lessons learned from early implementers in four states* (MR-526) (MDS-732). Santa Monica and Berkeley: RAND and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California at Berkeley.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 115. IMPROVING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL ***(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY—Each State Board receiving funds under this Act shall develop and implement a system for improving vocational education at the State and local level that includes:*** ***(1) reappointing a State Committee of Practitioners (Section 115);*** ***(2) conducting a State needs assessment in the first year under reauthorization and every two years thereafter (Section 116);*** ***(3) implementing a set of core performance measures and standards (Section 117);*** ***(4) conducting annual evaluations of program effectiveness (Section 118); and*** ***(5) providing technical assistance to local recipients on using performance data to improve vocational courses and programs (Section 119).*** ***This system shall build on the system initiated under the 1990 Perkins Act, and apply to all programs (as defined in Subsection (c)) receiving funds under Title II, and as appropriate, to programs funded under Title III of this Act.***		Section 115(a) of the 1995 Perkins Act is a new section, the purpose of which is to show how subsequent Sections 116 to 119 combine to form a comprehensive system for improving vocational education at the local and state levels. Most of the elements described under new Section 115(a) were included in the older legislation, but states were not directed in the older legislation to coordinate these activities nor to envision them as part of an overall improvement system. New Section 115(a) includes as components of an overall improvement system the Committee of Practitioners, State needs assessment, core performance measures and standards, and annual program evaluations, all of which were introduced in the 1990 Act. Additionally, the 1995 Act adds an emphasis on providing technical assistance to local recipients as a key component of the improvement system. The concepts that were covered in Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act—the Committee of Practitioners and the core performance measures and standards—are included in the proposed revised legislation under Sections 115(b) and 117.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 115. (b) REQUIREMENT—Each State Board, before the expiration of the 30-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of the *1995 Perkins Act, shall reappoint* a State Committee of Practitioners (referred to as the "Committee") *to develop the elements of a program improvement system contained under the above general authority. Committee members will be appointed in consultation* with local school officials representing eligible recipients, and representatives of organized labor, business, superintendents, community-based organizations, private industry councils established under Section 102(a) of the Job Training Partnership Act, State councils, parents, special populations, correctional institutions, the administrator appointed under Section 111(b)(1), the State administrator of programs assisted under Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act, the State administrator of programs assisted under Chapter 1 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the State administrator of programs for students of limited English proficiency, and guidance counselors, *and additionally—the State administrator of programs developed under Title II, Subtitle A of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, and the State administrator of programs assisted under Title III of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act.*	**SEC. 115. (a) GENERAL AUTHORITY**—Each State Board receiving funds under this Act, before the expiration of the 30-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990, shall appoint the State Committee of Practitioners (in this section referred to as the "Committee") as prescribed by Section 512(a) after consulting with local school officials representing eligible recipients, and representatives of organized labor, business, superintendents, community-based organizations, private industry councils established under Section 102(a) of the Job Training Partnership Act, State councils, parents, special populations, correctional institutions, the administrator appointed under Section 111(b)(1), the State administrator of programs assisted under Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act, the State administrator of programs assisted under Chapter 1 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the State administrator of programs for students of limited English proficiency, and guidance counselors.	The 1995 Act adds to the list of constituencies with which the State Board must consult in appointing the Committee of Practitioners: (1) the State administrator of programs developed under Title II, Subtitle A of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, and (2) the State administrator of programs assisted under Title III of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Consulting with these administrators will assist in coordinating program improvement and performance measurement strategies among the 1995 Perkins Act, School-to-Work Opportunities Act, and Goals 2000 initiatives in each state. This coordination directive is reinforced in new Section 117(c).

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 115. (c) DEFINITIONS—The State Board shall adopt the following definitions in its State plan: ***(1) Outcome—a measurable characteristic of student or program performance;*** ***(2) Measure—a method for quantifying performance in an outcome area;*** ***(3) Standard—the desired level of attainment on a measure, or the rate of progress on a measure;*** ***(4) Program—a sequence of courses or instruction in a sequence or aggregation of occupational competencies that includes occupationally specific skills, general employability skills, work attitudes, applied academic learning, higher-order reasoning, and problem-solving skills;*** ***(5) Special populations—includes individuals with disabilities, educationally and economically disadvantaged individuals (including foster children), individuals of limited English proficiency, individuals in programs nontraditional for their sex, and individuals in correctional institutions.*** ***The State Board shall also define the term "substantial progress" in its State plan so that the term is measurable and applies consistently to all recipients of Perkins funds in the state.***		**New Section 115(c) clarifies the definitions of outcome, measure, and standard; provides a definition of vocational programs; revises the definition of special populations, replacing "individuals who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias" with "individuals in programs nontraditional for their sex"; and requires the State Board to define the term "substantial progress" for use by local recipients in their annual program evaluations.**

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 116. STATE *NEEDS* ASSESSMENT **(a) IN GENERAL**—Each State Board receiving assistance under this Act shall conduct an assessment using measurable objective criteria developed by the State Board to assess program quality. Such criteria shall be developed in consultation with representatives of the *Committee* described in Section 115*(b)* and shall use information gathered by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and, *as* appropriate, other information. Each State Board shall widely disseminate such criteria. State Boards shall develop such criteria no later than the beginning of the *1996-1997* school year. Such criteria shall include—	**SEC. 116. STATE ASSESSMENT** **(a) IN GENERAL**—Each State Board receiving assistance under this Act shall conduct an assessment using measurable objective criteria developed by the State Board to assess program quality. Such criteria shall be developed in consultation with representatives of the groups described in Section 115(a) and shall use information gathered by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and, if appropriate, other information. Each State Board shall widely disseminate such criteria. State Boards shall develop such criteria no later than the beginning of the 1991-1992 school year. Such criteria shall include such factors as—	All of the criteria required by Section 116(a) of the 1990 Perkins Act to be included in the State needs assessment is contained in new Section 116(a). However, new Section 116(a) also adds several criteria and regroups the criteria into three groups: (1) information on outcomes (mostly new), (2) information on instructional practices and experiences, and (3) procedures for using existing resources and methods developed in other programs receiving federal assistance.
(1) Information on outcomes *(A) student gains in and/or attainment of academic, occupational, and/or generic work skills;* *(B) student retention in and/or completion of secondary or postsecondary education and/or vocational programs;* *(C) student placement into additional training or education, military service, and employment;* *(D) other outcome areas identified by the State under Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act;*	(3) increased student work skill attainment and job placement;	In particular, new Section 116(a)(1) directs the State Board to examine outcome data generated through the performance measures and standards system developed under the 1990 Perkins Act in conducting its needs assessment.
(2) Information on instructional practices and experiences— (A) integration of academic and vocational education; (B) the ability of the eligible recipients to meet the needs of special populations with respect to vocational education, *including providing incentives for participation, retention, and completion;*	(1) integration of academic and vocational education; (6) the ability of the eligible recipients to meet the needs of special populations with respect to vocational education;	Section 116(a)(2) requires the State Board to examine the instructional practices and experiences that contribute to creating quality vocational education programs. Subsequently, in new Section 118(a)(3), local recipients are required to consider the contribution of these instructional practices and experiences to their performance on the core measures and standards.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 116. STATE *NEEDS* ASSESSMENT—continued	**SEC. 116. STATE ASSESSMENT—continued**	
(C) assessing the quality of vocational education programs in schools with high concentrations of poor *or* low-achieving students;	(7) raising the quality of vocational education programs in schools with high concentrations of poor and low-achieving students;	
(D) enrollment, retention, and completion rates of students in vocational programs nontraditional for their sex;		New Section 116(a)(2)(D) reflects the sex equity concerns in the 1990 Perkins Act. These concerns are again echoed in new Section 117(b)(5) as part of the core performance measures and standards.
(E) sequential courses of study leading to both academic and occupational competencies;	(2) sequential course of study leading to both academic and occupational competencies;	
(F) linkages between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions;	(4) increased linkages between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions;	
(G) instruction and experience, to the extent practicable, in all aspects of the industry the students are preparing to enter;	(5) instruction and experience, to the extent practicable, in all aspects of the industry the students are preparing to enter;	
(H) the relevance of programs to the workplace and to the occupations for which students are to be trained, and the extent to which such programs reflect a realistic assessment of current and future labor market needs, including needs in areas of emerging technologies;	(8) the relevance of programs to the workplace and to the occupations for which students are to be trained, and the extent to which such programs reflect a realistic assessment of current and future labor market needs, including needs in areas of emerging technologies;	
(I) the ability of the vocational curriculum, equipment, and instructional materials to meet the demands of the workplace;	(9) the ability of the vocational curriculum, equipment, and instructional materials to meet the demands of the workplace;	
(J) basic and higher order current and future workplace competencies that will reflect the hiring needs of employers;	(10) basic and higher order current and future workplace competencies which will reflect the hiring needs of employers; and	New Section 116(a)(3) was contained in Section 115(b)(4) of the 1990 Perkins Act as part of the system of performance measures and standards. We believe it is more appropriate to examine these procedures as part of the State needs assessment.
(K) other factors considered appropriate by the State Board; and	(11) other factors considered appropriate by the State Board.	
(3) Procedures for using existing resources and methods developed in other programs receiving Federal assistance.		

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 116. (b) DEADLINE FOR ASSESSMENT—Each State Board shall complete the assessment required by Subsection (a) before the expiration of the 6-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of the *1995 Perkins Act, and every two years thereafter.*	**SEC. 116. (b) DEADLINE FOR ASSESSMENT**—Each State Board shall complete the assessment required by Subsection (a) before the expiration of the 6-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990.	New Section 116(b) requires the State Board to conduct a needs assessment every two years, making the needs assessment a regular activity as part of the system for improving vocational education.
SEC. 117. STATE AND LOCAL MEASURES AND STANDARDS **(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY**—Each State Board receiving funds under this Act shall *revise and implement a set of core standards and measures of performance* for secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs. *To advise the State Board, the Committee shall—* *(1) evaluate the reliability, validity, and lack of bias of the measures and standards developed under Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act;* *(2) assess the extent to which data generated under Section 115 of the 1990 Perkins Act were used effectively by recipients to improve programs and identify barriers to effective use;* *(3) recommend revisions to existing measures and standards; and* *(4) develop new measures and standards as required under Subsection (b).*	**SEC. 115. (a) GENERAL AUTHORITY**—Each State Board receiving funds under this Act shall develop and implement a statewide system of core standards and measures of performance for secondary and post-secondary vocational education programs.	New Section 117(a) directs the State Board to revise the core measures and standards developed under the 1990 Perkins Act with regard to technical quality and the effectiveness of their past use for improving programs. The new section also eliminates use of the term "system" when referring to the core measures and standards, reserving that term instead for the overall "system" for improving vocational education as described in new Section 115(a).

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 117. (a)—continued *Revisions to the core measures and standards will be recommended by the Committee and approved by each State Board no later than one year after the enactment of the 1995 Perkins Act. This core shall apply to all programs (as defined in Section 115(c)(4)) receiving funds under Title II of this Act. Additionally, the State Board may require that the core apply to any programs funded under Title III such as consumer and homemaking education and tech-prep.* Eligible recipients may make local modifications to such *core* based on economic, geographic, or demographic factors, or the characteristics of the population to be served. Such modifications shall conform to the assessment criteria contained in the State plan. *The State Board shall convene the Committee on a regular basis to review, comment on, and propose revisions to the State's core standards and measures of performance for vocational programs.*	**SEC. 115. (a)—continued** . . . such system shall be developed and implemented before the end of the 2-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990 and shall apply to all programs assisted under this Act. Eligible recipients may make local modifications to such system based on economic, geographic, or demographic factors, or the characteristics of the population to be served. Such modifications shall conform to the assessment criteria contained in the State plan. The State Board shall convene the Committee on a regular basis to review, comment on, and propose revisions to a draft State proposal, which the State Board shall develop, for a system of core standards and measures of performance for vocational programs.	Under new Section 117(a) the State Board is encouraged to extend the core performance measures and standards to cover Title III programs such as consumer and homemaking education and Tech Prep. The option to make local modifications to the system has been maintained.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 117. (b) REQUIREMENTS—Each system developed under Subsection (a) shall include *at least five measures and standards*— *(1) a measure of student learning gains in the achievement of academic skills;* *(2)* 1 or more *of the following measures of work-related skills*— *(A) occupational competency attainment in the industry a student is preparing to enter;* *(B) attainment of work readiness or generic work skills;* *(C) attainment of understanding of all aspects of the industry a student is preparing to enter;* *(3) 1 or both of the following measures of retention or completion*— *(A) retention in or completion of secondary or postsecondary education;* *(B) retention in or completion of secondary or postsecondary occupational programs or other programs funded under Title III, as appropriate;* *(4) a measure of placement into additional training or education (including placement into the postsecondary component of tech-prep or other School-to-Work transition program), military service, or employment; and* *(5) a measure of access and equity such as rates of enrollment in, retention in, and/or completion of occupational or other programs for special populations in comparison to non-special populations, including male and female students in programs nontraditional for their sex.*	**SEC. 115. (b) REQUIREMENTS**—Each system developed under Subsection (a) shall include— (1) measures of learning and competency gains, including student progress in the achievement of basic and more advanced academic skills; (2) 1 or more measures of performance, which shall include only— (A) competency attainment; (B) job or work skill attainment or enhancement including student progress in achieving occupational skills necessary to obtain employment in the field for which the student has been prepared, including occupational skills in the industry the student is preparing to enter; (C) retention in school or completion of secondary school or its equivalent; and (D) placement into additional training or education, military service, or employment; (3) incentives or adjustments that are— (A) designed to encourage service to targeted groups or special populations; and (B) for each student, consistent with the student's individualized education program developed under Section 614(a)(5) of the Education of the Handicapped Act, where appropriate; and (4) procedures for using existing resources and methods developed in other programs receiving Federal assistance.	New Section 117(b) expands from two to five the number of measures and standards required as part of the core. The section regroups the measurement choices under the old Act, simplifies them, and adds a measure of access and equity.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 117. (c) CONSISTENCY *AND COORDINATION* WITH OTHER PROGRAMS—In developing the standards and measures included in a system developed under Subsection (a), the State Board shall— (1) consider standards and measures developed under job opportunities and basic skills training programs established and operated under a plan approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services that meets the requirements of Section 402(a)(19) of the Social Security Act; (2) consider standards prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under Section 106 of the Job Training Partnership Act; *(3) coordinate with State efforts to implement performance measures developed under Title IV, Section 402 of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act;* *(4) build on the content and student performance standards and related assessments developed under Title II, Part B of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in assessing student learning gains in the achievement of academic skills at the secondary level; and* *(5) build on the industry skill standards and related assessments and certifications developed under Title V of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (the National Skill Standards Act) in assessing student attainment of occupational competencies at the secondary level, and at the postsecondary level as appropriate.*	**SEC. 115. (c) CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PROGRAMS**—In developing the standards and measures included in a system developed under Subsection (a), the State Board shall take into consideration— (1) standards and measures developed under job opportunities and basic skills training programs established and operated under a plan approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services that meets the requirements of Section 402(a)(19) of the Social Security Act; and (2) standards prescribed by the Secretary of Labor under Section 106 of the Job Training Partnership Act.	In addition to considering standards developed under JOBS and JTPA, new Section 117(c) adds the requirement to coordinate with standard setting efforts under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which includes the National Skill Standards Act. For example, academic standards developed under Goals 2000 could be used to measure "learning gains in the achievement of academic skills" (Sec. 117(b)(1)), and industry skills standards developed under the National Skill Standards Act could be used to measure "work-related skills" (Sec. 117(b)(2)).

NCRVE, MDS-821

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 117. (d) INFORMATION PROVIDED BY STATE BOARD— (1) The Committee shall make recommendations to the State Board with respect to modifying standards and measures to be used under this section, based on the information provided under paragraph (2) *and on the state needs assessment described under Section 118.* *(2) In order to improve the system of measures and standards as directed under Subsection (a),* the State Board shall provide to the Committee information concerning differing types of standards and measures, including— (A) the advantages and disadvantages of each type of standard or measure; (B) instances in which such standards and measures have been effective; (C) instances in which such standards and measures have not been effective; *(D) information about standards, measures, and assessment instruments already in use statewide that may be incorporated into the core set of performance measures and standards; and* *(E) information provided through federal technical assistance as described under Section 119, as appropriate.* (3) In the event that the State Board does not accept the Committee's recommendations made as required by paragraph (1), the State Board shall set forth in the State plan its reasons for not accepting such recommendations.	**SEC. 115. (d) REQUIREMENTS—INFORMATION PROVIDED BY STATE BOARD—** (1) The Committee shall make recommendations to the State Board with respect to modifying standards and measures to be used under this section, based on the information provided under paragraph (2). (2) To assist the Committee in formulating recommendations under paragraph (1), the State Board shall provide to the Committee information concerning differing types of standards and measures, including— (A) the advantages and disadvantages of each type of standard or measure; (B) instances in which such standards and measures have been effective; and (C) instances in which such standards and measures have not been effective. (3) In the event that the State Board does not accept the Committee's recommendations made as required by paragraph (1), the State Board shall set forth in the State plan its reasons for not accepting such recommendations.	New Section 117(d) is similar to old Section 115(d). However, new Section 117(d) requires the State Board, in modifying the core, to examine the State needs assessment, as well as information on standards, measures, and assessment instruments already in use statewide and information provided through federal technical assistance. New Section 117(e) requires the State Board to submit to the Department of Education as part of its State plan a description of its core measures and standards as well as a plan for providing technical assistance to local recipients. This provision emphasizes the importance of technical assistance for ensuring that performance data will be used effectively by local recipients to improve programs.
(e) SUBMISSIONS—Each State Board will submit to the Department of Education as part of its State plan: (1) the measures and standards to be used, and (2) an implementation plan including plans for providing technical assistance to local recipients of Perkins funds, as required under Section 119.		

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 118. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT **(a) ANNUAL EVALUATION**—Each recipient of financial assistance under Part C of Title II shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of the *programs* conducted with assistance under this Act, *including programs funded under Title III as determined by the State Board in Section 117(a). This evaluation shall be accomplished in consultation with teachers, parents, representatives of individuals who are members of special populations, and industry representatives.* As part of such evaluation, each such recipient shall— *(1) evaluate the effectiveness of programs with respect to performance on each measure and standard developed under Section 117;* *(2) evaluate the performance of special populations in comparison to non-special populations on each such measure and standard;* *(3) evaluate the contribution of the instructional practices and experiences identified under Section 116(a)(2) to performance on the measures and standards;* *(4) evaluate the contribution of any projects, services, and activities conducted with assistance under this Act to performance on the measures and standards; and* *(5) identify and adopt strategies to improve performance on the measures and standards.*	**SEC. 117. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT** **(a) ANNUAL EVALUATION**—Each recipient of financial assistance under Part C of Title II shall annually evaluate the effectiveness of the program conducted with assistance under this Act based on the standards and measures (or modifications thereto) developed as required by Section 115. As part of each such evaluation, each such recipient shall— (1) review programs, with the full and informed participation of representatives of individuals who are members of special populations, to— (A) identify and adopt strategies to overcome any barriers which are resulting in lower rates of access to vocational education programs or success in such programs for individuals who are members of special populations; and (B) evaluate the progress of individuals who are members of special populations in vocational education programs assisted under this Act; and (2) evaluate the progress of vocational education programs assisted under this Act in providing vocational education students with strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of the industry the students are preparing to enter.	New Section 118(a) requires local recipients to evaluate annually the effectiveness of their Perkins-assisted programs, including programs funded under Title III if the State Board so determined under Section 117(a). New Section 118(a) requires local recipients to evaluate their programs with respect to student performance on each measure, as well as to disaggregate performance on each measure for special populations, including males and females in programs nontraditional for their sex. The annual evaluation must also consider the contributions of instructional practices and experiences identified under the State needs assessment and of Perkins-assisted services, projects, and activities to performance on the measures. The concerns under old Sections 117(a)(1) and (2) are addressed in multiple ways during the annual evaluation. For instance, by requiring local recipients to consider the contribution of State-identified instructional practices and experiences to performance on the core measures, new Section 118(a) effectively requires recipients to examine annually (1) their ability to meet the needs of special populations (Section 116(a)(2)(B)); (2) the prevalence of instruction in all aspects of the industry (Section 116(a)(2)(G)), both emphasized in Section 117(a) of the 1990 Perkins Act; and (3) other instructional practices, such as integration of vocational and academic education. Furthermore, new Section 117(b) requires states to adopt one of three measures of work-related skills, including attainment of understanding of all aspects of the industry, as well as a measure of access and equity for special populations.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 118. (b) LOCAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN—Beginning not less than 1 year after the implementation of the provisions of Section *117, all recipients of funds under Part C of Title II will develop a local program improvement plan that summarizes the self-evaluation conducted under Subsection (a). A recipient that does not meet the standards under Section 117 must describe in its local program improvement plan specific strategies for making substantial progress (as defined by the State Board under Section 115(c)) toward those standards in the coming year. Such local program improvement plans shall be updated annually.*	**SEC. 117. (b) LOCAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN**—Beginning not less than 1 year after the implementation of the provisions of Section 115, if any recipient described in Subsection (a) determines that the recipient is not making substantial progress in meeting the standards and measures developed as required by Section 115, such recipient shall develop a plan, in consultation with teachers, parents, and students concerned, for program improvement for the succeeding school year. Such plan shall describe how the recipient will identify and modify programs funded under Part C of Title II, including— (1) a description of vocational education and career development strategies designed to achieve progress in improving the effectiveness of the program conducted with assistance under this Act; and (2) if necessary, a description of strategies designed to improve supplementary services provided to individuals who are members of special populations.	As an important part of making the annual evaluation become part of an ongoing process for improving vocational programs, new Section 118(b) requires that *all* recipients of funds under Part C of Title II annually develop a local program improvement plan based on the annual evaluation.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 118. (c) STATE AND LOCAL JOINT PLAN—If, 1 year *after* implementation of the plan described in Subsection (b), *and each year thereafter, substantial* progress in meeting the standards and measures developed *under Section 117* has not been made, the State shall work jointly with the recipient, and teachers, parents, and students concerned, to develop a plan for program improvement. Each such plan shall contain— (1) a description of the technical assistance and program activities the State will provide to enhance the performance of the recipient; (2) a reasonable timetable to improve *recipient* performance under the plan; (3) a description of vocational education strategies *the recipient will adopt to improve performance on the measures;* and (4) if necessary, a description of strategies *the recipient will adopt* to improve supplementary services provided to individuals who are members of special populations.	**SEC. 117. (c) STATE AND LOCAL JOINT PLAN**—If, after 1 year of implementation of the plan described in Subsection (b), sufficient progress in meeting the standards and measures developed as required by Section 115 has not been made, the State shall work jointly with the recipient and teachers, parents, and students concerned to develop a plan for program improvement. Each such plan shall contain— (1) a description of the technical assistance and program activities the State will provide to enhance the performance of the eligible recipient; (2) a reasonable timetable to improve the school performance under the plan; (3) a description of vocational education strategies designed to improve the performance of the program as measured by the evaluation; and (4) if necessary, a description of strategies designed to improve supplementary services provided to individuals who are members of special populations.	As under the old Act, new Section 118(c) requires that a joint local and state improvement plan be developed if substantial progress—as defined under new Section 115(c)—in meeting the standards and measures has not been made 1 year after implementation of the first local program improvement plan developed under new Section 118(b), and each year thereafter.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 118. (d) FURTHER ACTION—The State shall, in conjunction with the eligible recipient, annually review and revise the joint plan developed under Subsection (c) in order to improve *program* performance and will continue to do so each consecutive year until the recipient sustains, for more than 1 year, *substantial progress toward or meets the standards developed under Section 117.*	**SEC. 117. (d) FURTHER ACTION**—The State shall, in conjunction with the eligible recipient, annually review and revise the joint plan developed under Subsection (c) in order to improve performance and will continue to do so each consecutive year until the recipient sustains, for more than 1 year, fulfillment of the State and local standards and measures developed under Section 115.	New Section 118(d) requires that the joint state and local program improvement plan be revised annually until the recipient sustains, for more than 1 year, substantial progress toward *or* meets the standards developed under new Section 117.
SEC. 119. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE **(a)** ***FEDERAL ASSISTANCE***—The Secretary shall provide technical assistance to the States, *directly or by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, with respect to the development and implementation of systems under Section 115 and subsequent sections, including assistance on—* *(1) setting performance standards;* *(2) evaluating the reliability, validity, and lack of bias of measures and standards;* *(3) selecting and developing appropriate assessment tools, including methods for assessing academic gains at the postsecondary level;* *(4) coordinating Perkins measures and standards with other evolving and emerging federal initiatives such as National Industry Skill Standards and School-to-Work performance measures;* *(5) collecting and disseminating information on models for using performance data for program improvement, particularly at the local level; and* *(6) planning for and providing technical assistance to local recipients.* In providing such assistance, the Secretary shall utilize existing resources in other Federal agencies.	**SEC. 115. (e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**—The Secretary shall provide technical assistance to the States with respect to the development of systems under Subsection (a). In providing such assistance, the Secretary shall utilize existing resources in other Federal agencies.	New Section 119 substantially expands the technical assistance requirements at both the state and federal levels. These requirements address many of the shortcomings in State implementation of Perkins performance measures and standards found by Stecher et al. (1994) in their interim report. Specifically, under new Section 119(a), the Secretary must assist the States with the technical quality of their measures and standards, the lack of appropriate assessment tools, coordination with other workforce preparedness initiatives, and local implementation of a program improvement process.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
***SEC. 119. (b) STATE ASSISTANCE**—Each State Board shall provide technical assistance, directly or by grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, to local recipients with respect to the implementation of Sections 117 and 118, including—* *(1) assistance on evaluating the effectiveness of programs based on the performance measures and standards developed under Section 117;* *(2) assistance on identifying and adopting appropriate strategies for improving performance on such measures and standards;* *(3) training local administrators and instructors in the use of performance data to improve vocational courses and programs based on the assessment conducted under Section 117(a); and* *(4) disseminating to local recipients examples of the effective use of performance data to improve vocational courses and programs.* *Section 102 allocates an annual amount for the technical assistance activities identified under this subsection from the allotment made to each State from funds appropriated under Section 3(a).*		New Section 119(b) requires each State Board to assist local recipients with successfully implementing a program improvement process. Furthermore, the 1995 Act requires that States set aside an annual amount of Perkins funds specifically for providing technical assistance to local recipients.

1995 PERKINS ACT	1990 PERKINS ACT	COMMENTARY
SEC. 120. ***EVALUATING STATE AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS*** **(a) REPORT**—The Secretary shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the Congress not later than the expiration of the 4-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of *1995*. Such report shall include— (1) a detailed description of the status of each State's system *for improving vocational education at the State and local level developed as required by Section 115 and subsequent sections;* (2) an assessment of the *reliability, validity, and lack of bias of the measures and standards adopted under Section 117; and* *(3) an assessment of the degree to which the use of these systems have led to program improvement at the State and local levels.*	**SEC. 115. (f) REPORT**—The Secretary shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the Congress not later than the expiration of the 4-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990. Such report shall include— (1) a detailed description of the status of each State's system of standards and measures developed as required by this section; (2) an assessment of the validity, predictiveness, and reliability of such standards and measures, unbiased to special populations, in the areas of academic achievement, vocational skill competencies, employment outcomes, and postsecondary continuation and attainment; and (3) an evaluation of the comparability of State-developed performance standards across States to establish a core of common indicators.	New Section 120 expands the federal evaluation of Perkins from a strict evaluation of performance measures and standards to the entire system for improving vocational education as introduced in new Section 115(a) and detailed in subsequent sections. However, new Section 120 maintains an emphasis on the technical quality of the core measures and standards implemented by the States. Additionally, rather than emphasizing the comparability of State-developed measures and standards, new Section 120 requires the Secretary to examine the extent to which the systems required under the proposed new legislation have actually led to program improvement at the local and State levels.